564 within a few feet. Equal interdining took place
[264] only between members of the same caste or sub-caste, but at a higher caste feast members of lower castes might receive food from higher caste hosts. The Nambudiris, royalty, chiefs, temple servants, retainers, middle-class and servant Nayars thus collectively formed the
[611] "good" castes of the society. Nambudiris and two small castes of their temple servants were patrilineal; all the rest were matrilineal. (1)

[361] Below all these castes, living in a separate
[783] part of the village, were the "low" or "polluting" castes. These included in order of rank, Iravas or toddy-tappers and tenant-farmers, with 20 to 50 households per village; Kanisans (astrologers) with one to three households per village; the artisan castes (blacksmiths, gold-smiths, carpenters, bell-metal workers and stone-masons, who ranked equally) each with one to three houses per village; low caste washermen and barbers (who ranked equally) each with one to five houses per village; and bow-makers, each with about one to ten houses per village. Iravas,
[611] Kanisans, washermen and barbers had double
[595] unilineal descent: [25] patrilineal, patrilocal ex-
[614] tended families with fraternal polyandrv, cross-c cut by large exogamous dispersed matrilineal clans. Artisans and bow-makers had patrilineal descent with patrilocal extended families and
[437] fraternal polyandry. All of these castes worked for each other and for the "good" castes of the
524 village. Iravas, the most numerous and influen-
427 tial, owned their own house-sites and leased rice-lands and other garden lands from the matrilineal

564 kanam tenants of the village, on a triennial ten-
427 ure (verum-pattam) retaining about one-fifth of the produce for their own sustenance and paying
564 the rest as rent in kind. One or more small
437 patrilineal groups of each of the other castes had what was called a desam avakasam or "village right," namely the right to work exclusively for members of their natal village. Sometimes, in the case of small castes such as astrologers and barbers, the right might extend to several adjacent villages who collectively shared the labour of one servant family. Avakasams were hereditary in patrilineal groups; they involved payment in paddy and vegetables by each patron household, of whatever caste, after the two harvests of the year, and the right to take part in village festivals and be fed at higher caste festivals and marriages.

[791] Astrologers and artisans were hired by all the higher castes of the village, by each other and
[305] by Iravas who ranked above them. Barbers worked for all the lower polluting castes of this group, but not for the "good" castes who em-
[296] ployed the Nayar barber. Washermen laundered for all the lower polluting castes but not regularly for the "good" castes, who employed the Nayar washerman; however, the low [26] caste washerman's lineage must provide clean cloths for the "good" castes after death, menstruation and childbirth and had ritual obligations to high caste women on the two latter occasions. Bow-
564 makers served Nayars and Iravas. Each of the
783 lower polluting castes was endogamous and interdined equally only within the caste. Rules of

564 ritual pollution decreed that the several lower
783 castes might not touch each other, and that members of each lower caste, according to their ritual rank, must refrain from approaching members of the "good" castes within distance ranging from 15 to 40 feet.

564 Finally, on the outskirts of the village, in a
[361] separate area, lived the serf-castes of Parayas
437 and Pulayas. Parayas were a small caste of basket and umbrella-makers; in each village two or three households had a village right to serve all castes above them. Pulayas were until 1850 the agricultural serfs of Nayars, temple-servants and Nambudiris. Each property-group of these castes owned one or more families of Pulayas as its ancestral property who could be bought and sold. Food, household materials and clothing were provided for serfs by their owners. The Pulayas were freed by law in 1850, since when they have been landless agricultural labourers serving the "good" castes and Iravas for daily
[783] wages in kind. As "exterior" castes, Parayas and Pulayas may not approach "good" castes within a distance of about 60 feet and may not enter the "good" area of the village or walk on the main roads. (These rules were however abolished by law at Independence in 1947.) [27] Each caste is endogamous and the two may not
[611] interdine. Unlike the higher castes they have a bilateral kinship system without unilineal descent groups. In addition to these Hindu castes
361 there were and are in Kerala large groups of
563 Muslims and Christians. (2) Christians had their separate villages and were divided into castes in a similar manner to Hindus. Muslims

421 (2) The Traditional Economic System

423 The kanam tenure had significance as an institution which linked the system of payments in kind, found within the inland villages, to the [433] cash economy of the coastal towns. Traditionally, each village appears to have been self-sufficient for the basic necessities of life. The high castes paid lower caste servants daily or thrice annually in paddy and the lower castes traded services and some goods with each other with paddy as their medium of exchange. Irava tenants paid their rents in paddy to Nayar kanakkar, who in turn paid a much smaller rent in paddy to the janmi.

Nayar men, however, though they lived mainly from the produce of their estates, were also paid in cash by the Raja in return for military service. [436] The use of money was otherwise confined mainly to the coast-towns and to overseas' trade with the Arabs, Portuguese, Dutch, French and English in pepper and other commodities. This trade was largely carried on by the Muslims, who were originally, from the ninth century, converted from the lower Hindu castes by Arab [442] traders. Muslim middlemen obtained pepper from cultivators of inland and foothill villages in return for cloth obtained from overseas, or manufactured by Hindu castes of weavers in the towns. They traded the pepper for cash to Arabs [451] and Europeans. The royal lineage obtained revenue by several kinds of taxes levelled on this merchandise, and paid the Nayar armies from its coffers. The Nayars in turn made periodic kanam cash payments to Nambudiri and other

437 landlords, who would otherwise, apparently, hav
423 been excluded from the cash economy. Such
[511] money could be spent by the Nambudiri and Nayar aristocracy on clothing and imported luxury goods available in Muslim bazaars in the towns. Some Muslims also held kanam lands in villages whence they could obtain rice and vegetables. Others bought food for cash from Nayar tenants.
[556] Apart from the kanam tenure the use of cash was however, extremely restricted in inland villages and surplus cash was converted into gold ornaments or other objects of ostentation. Among
[583] the lower castes small coins had a symbolic value, and a fixed number were handed over in marriage payments, but their use in economic exchange among the lower castes appears to have been negligible.

434 In spite therefore of the considerable overseas
554 trade, the complex division of labour, and the marked differences in wealth (expressed chiefly in size of houses, differences of clothing and jewelry, and types of food) between the several castes, the overall economy of Kerala in the traditional period was relatively stationary, and such social mobility as there was, was confined to the Muslims, Christians and "good" Hindu castes above Nayar retainers. It appears to
[613] have been this fact which permitted the persis-
[631] tence of such a relatively rigid feudal system and the existence, within each homogeneous local caste group, of a lineage system as the main organizing principle.

000 (3) Traditional Political Administration

2:Gough E-4, 5 (1947-1949)1961 A Wll Kerala A Wll
Central Kerala Nayar

originally rendered a portion of the produce to the landlord and additionally paid tribute in kind at New Year and at the succession of a new landlord or a new tenant on the death of the old (*ibid.*, I: 605–614). In return for their hereditary land rights tenants owed military and personal services to the landlord or to his military representative.

Each Nayar tenant household, like the landlord, retained a portion of land for cultivation by its serfs. Serfs were attached to the plots on which they lived, took the house name of their masters and were held as ancestral property. The master supplied the serf with daily rice, building materials, a house site, and special gifts at life crises and festivals.

Each tenant household also gave some lands to cultivating subtenant households (*verumpāttamdar*) of the Tiyyar caste. According to Logan, the latter traditionally retained one-third of the net produce and surrendered the rest to their masters (*ibid.*, I: 583).

The Nayar servant castes and most of the polluting castes of village servants (astrologers, artisans, bow makers, basket makers, etc.) owed their main services to the landlord, the Nayar tenants, or both. Each family held the hereditary service right of a village or occasionally of a small group of adjacent villages. Village servants gave their services to the appropriate higher-caste households when required. In return they received from each patron household customary biennial shares of rice and other goods after the two harvests of the year. Each servant family held a house site and garden from the landlord by hereditary right and was provided by its various patrons with the materials (metal, wood, etc.) of its craft.

Among the higher polluting castes, most of the village servants (astrologers, artisans, washermen, barbers, etc.) simply exchanged services reciprocally without making gifts of grain. Within this range of castes, however, Tiyyars, as cultivators, were subsidiary agents of redistribution, for they received the services of almost all the village servant castes and made biennial gifts to them of grain.

The village was thus almost self-sufficient for food and the daily necessities of life. In addition, part of its produce in rice and coconuts went out in the form of annual tribute given by the landlord to his district chief. The chief in turn gave tribute to the king and in addition rendered succession fees and gifts at life-crisis rites (Logan, 1951, II: ccxviii–ccxix; Ayyar, 1938: 270).

A large part of the king's revenue, however, came from taxes on overseas trade. Before 1500 the trade was in the hands of Arab merchants, who obtained pepper and other spices from inland land-

2:Gough E-4, 5 (1947-1949)1961 A Wll Kerala A Wll
Central Kerala Nayar

613 in Malayalam and some became famous poets during the sixteenth
868 and later centuries. A Nayar received his arms from his feudal lord
[212] —a village headman, a district chief, or a prince—at the age of sixteen. From this time until, perhaps, late middle age, he seems to have
[702] spent periods of each year away from his village attending military
[926] exercises in the larger towns or fighting in the continual wars against the North Malabar chiefdoms, Walluvanad, or Palghat, or between Cochin and Calicut themselves. Evidently Nayars also spent long periods in their villages, at least in the monsoon seasons, for they policed the villages, arranged village festivals, were bailiffs on the landlord's domain, and paid regular visits to local wives. Nayar youths were also obliged to attend with their seniors and fulfill ceremonial obligations
[182] at the life-crisis rites of the landlord family. The rites were of course
[439] conducted in a grand manner and served as a focus for the collection and redistribution of perishable goods throughout the village.

613 Nayar youths also did some cultivation of vegetables and spices in
868 the gardens of their taravāds. Every youth received a rigorous train-
241 ing in cultivation methods, land management, the keeping of accounts, and the construction of houses, either directly from his kāranavan or, more usually, from the brothers of his own mother. However, there was no clear-cut allocation of differential authority and economic roles among the junior men of a taravād in this area. This was evidently not necessary because the bulk of the work was done by tenants and serfs, whose management could be most easily controlled by a single experienced man. It was enough that a young Nayar should learn *how* to manage and to cultivate so that he might one day replace his kāranavan. Their military duties were obviously the important ones for junior
[701] Nayars. It is unfortunate that we know next to nothing about how they were organized in the army, or even if they fought in lineage groups under the leadership of their mothers' brothers. All we know is that they were for the most part recruited in lineages, with the members of one lineage serving the same feudal lord.

613 The division of labor between the sexes was less rigid than in most
462 Hindu castes, but was well demarcated in daily life. Girls played with boys, attended the village school, and even received training in the
[588] gymnasium, until they underwent the tāli rite, usually at about the age of eleven. After this they were segregated from the men of their lineage and concentrated their time on domestic tasks. For most purposes the group of matrilineally related women formed a single work unit under the informal authority of the oldest (or oldest competent) woman. She gave out produce for cooking and allotted to each woman

3:Gough E-4, 5 (1947-1949)1961 AW11 Kerala AW11
North Kerala Nayar

marks that "When a high-caste Nayar becomes ripe, he turns into a king."

Low productivity and poor communications perhaps made the exaction of tribute more difficult than in Central Kerala, and this fact, plus the uncertain nature of trade, made the local rulers perennially short of funds. This is probably the reason why, although they were trained for warfare in gymnasia in their villages, Nayars were not regularly conscripted into a national army. Instead, they merely fought sporadically on behalf of local chiefs. Further, chiefs and village headmen were insufficiently strong to bring all the land under their control. Their domains were larger than those of Nayar commoners, but most commoner Nayar property groups were independent small landlords in their own right within their villages. Since they were not full-time warriors and since in many areas they had no serfs, Nayar commoners also did part of their own cultivation on their small estates. Part of their land, however, they leased to Tiyyar tenants as in Central Kerala. The polluting castes of village servants had the same rights and spatial distribution as in Central Kerala. In general, the economic processes of reciprocity and redistribution in villages proceeded in a comparable manner.

As independent warrior-cultivators, the Nayar commoners were not divided into separate castes of retainers owing allegiance as vassals and *kānam* tenants to different kinds of lords. Most villages were nominally under Nayar village headmen. In villages of the Kottayam and Kadattunad kingdoms, both the headman's lineage and those of the Nayar commoners belonged to a large caste called Nambiars, who appear to have intermarried throughout the kingdom. Although of the same general caste as commoners, and not forbidden by religious law from intermarrying equally with commoners, Nambiar village headmen's lineages tended, however, to intermarry only with each other or to take wives only from the commoners, occasionally giving their own women in marriage to chiefs or Brahmans. Chiefs claimed a higher caste rank as Samantan Nambiars, and royalty as Kshattriyas. These aristocratic lineages conducted hypergamous marriages with each other and with Nambudiris as in Central Kerela.

Judicial processes were somewhat less centralized than in the Central kingdoms. At least in theory, grave crimes and civil disputes in urban centers seem to have been tried in royal courts, but most civil disputes inland were apparently tried by local chiefs. Under the chiefs, caste assemblies of neighborhoods took care of crimes against religious law as in the Central kingdoms. Murder among Nayars

11: India G-4, 5 (1960-1961) 1962 AWII Kerala AWII

50 per cent higher than at the all-India level. Agricultural crops and the plantations, which form the main component of the primary sector, are largely produced for the market and are the basic factors responsible for imparting a high level of productivity to this sector.

1.26 Agriculture in the State is characterized by a high value yielding cropping pattern, good physical yields, a high intensity of cropping and superior cultivation techniques. During 1956-57 the intensity of cropping[1] was 119 per cent (all-India—113%). However, if field crops alone are taken into account, the cropping intensity shoots up to 150 per cent. It is the latter percentage which is the more relevant one, since the area covered by the perennial crops is irrelevant from the point of view of double or triple cropping. All these factors combine to make the agricultural sector of Kerala highly productive, the average level of agricultural output per net cultivated acre in Kerala being about Rs. 360 against Rs. 125 for the whole of India.

1.27 Kerala owes the superiority of its cropping pattern to the large number of high value yielding plantation crops grown in the State. Coconuts, the most important among these, occupy about 20 per cent of the gross cropped area and yield Rs. 450 per acre on an average. Other cash crops in the order of their importance in terms of area covered are pepper, rubber, arecanut, tea, cashewnut, cardamom, and coffee. Taken as a whole, they cover approximately 40 per cent of the gross cropped area.

1.28 Apart from the high productivity aspect of the plantation crops, they are of significance to the economy from two other angles. First, these crops provide the raw material for some of the key industries of the State. Coir making, the most important industry of the State, utilizes the outer husks of the coconuts. Similarly, cashewnut industry, the second most important industry of Kerala, also draws its raw material from the agricultural sector. Besides these, Kerala holds almost a complete all-India monopoly in the production of rubber, which is another important industrial raw material. Secondly, plantation crops derive their prominence from the fact that a large number of crops grown in Kerala find a good export market and are, therefore, very good foreign exchange earners.

1.29 One other feature of the Kerala economy which owes its origin to the agricultural sector may also be pointed out. Unlike the rest of India, where barter trade is still prevalent on a significant scale in the rural areas, Kerala economy is highly monetized. The large number of cash crops grown in the State are all brought to the market for sale. Secondly, since a high percentage of food requirements are obtained from the other parts of India, they are again channelled through the market. A high degree of commercialization of Kerala economy is one of the factors responsible for absorption of a large section of the population in the tertiary sector.

1.30 Otherwise agriculture in Kerala carries with it all the disquieting features common to Indian agriculture. The pressure of population on land is even severer here. The average size of holdings in Kerala has dwindled down to 1.5 acres

[1] Intensity of cropping is the ratio between gross cropped area and net sown area. It gives the degree to which a given piece of land is utilised.

Transport

5.46 The entire coastline of Kerala is well served by the railways. From Trivandrum to Kayankulam and from Tirur to Manjeswar, a total distance of 220 miles, the tracks are only two to three miles from the sea coast. In addition, there is a motorable road running almost all along the entire coastline. Head loads, bicycles, motor lorries, all these modes are employed for the transportation of fish to the markets depending on the distance of the landing sites from the consuming centres.

5.47 The State Fisheries Department operates four insulated vans. In addition, the Department operates two insulated carrier boats, one from Cochin and the other from Azhikode. These boats transport iced-fish through the inland waters to the interior places. For the marketing of fish in the interior areas, the Indo-Norwegian Project operates eight refrigerated vans.

5.48 It is estimated that the State will require about 60 road vehicles and 20 carrier vessels during the next 10 years. The capital expenditure on these is expected to be about Rs. 40 lakhs, of which Rs. 15 lakhs would be required during the Third Plan. The trucks and carrier vessels should, as far as possible, be owned and operated by Fishermen's Cooperative Societies. Expansion of insulated wagon facilities on the railways will be equally necessary. Insulated wagons should be provided on routes connecting the major production centres with the consumption centres.

Marketing

5.49 The marketing of fish in Kerala is not well organized. At present it is controlled by a few moneylenders and fish merchants. The fishermen are very poor and have generally to depend on borrowings during the off season. A departmental survey reveals that in 1958 the fishermen in Kerala had total assets of only about Rs. 30 lakhs against a total debt of Rs. 135 lakhs. Only a small percentage of the fishermen in Kerala own the boats and nets they use. Most of them work as employees under few boat-owner fishermen. In the pay-off period the boat-owner advances small amounts to the fishermen for their day-to-day needs. The catch is auctioned at the landing centres. The bidders include the fish curers, the retailers and lorry owners, who generally supply fish to the retailers.

5.50 Fish prices fluctuate considerably even in the course of the day. Fish is never weighed in the market. They are measured by standards such as heap, basket, and number, and these vary from market to market. The important wholesale fish markets in the State are located at Trivandrum, Kottayam, Tonur, Trichur, Kozhikode, Alwaye, Changanacherry and Athirumpuzha.

5.51 Changanacherry, Athirumpuzha and Vaniyankulam are the most important markets for cured and salted fish. In the coastal areas the consumption of dried fish is confined mostly to the off-season when fishing totally stops. In the interior of the State, owing to lack of transport facilities, cured fish is sold for the major part of the year. The State has a number of retail fish markets, every town or a group of villages having at least one.

5.52 Fish marketing in Kerala requires a great deal of improvement, both